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Message Text

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40
ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 SCI-06

AEC-11 AECE-00 EA-11 DRC-01 /131 W
---------- 107513
O R 211027Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9880
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 2152

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TECH, IN, SF
SUBJECT: INDIA NUCLEAR TESTING

REF: A) STATE 104647 (NOTAL), B) PRETORIA 770

1. SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAS MADE NO STATEMENT RE INDIAN NUCLEAR TESTS. PRESS HERE HAS GIVEN NO UNUSUAL PROMINENCE TO STORY OF MAY 18 NUCLEAR EXPLOSION IN INDIA. ONLY EDITORIAL EMBASSY HAS SEEN ON SUBJECT THUS FAR APPEARED IN RAND DAILY MAIL MAY 21. MAIL SAID ADDITION OF INDIA TO NUMBER OF NATIONS WHICH POSSESS NUCLEAR CAPABILITY CAN ONLY ADD TO ANXIETY AND FEAR THAT ALREADY EXISTS CONCERNING ATOMIC WEAPONS. FOR, MAIL POINTS OUT, "WHATEVER ASSURANCES INDIA GIVES ABOUT RESTRICTING NUCLEAR POWER TO PEACEFUL PURPOSES," IT IS A COUNTRY WHICH ALREADY HAS GONE TO WAR WITH ITS IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOR, AND THE TEMPTATION "MUST SURELY EXIST TO ENSURE FOR FUTURE CONFLICT BY GOING FOR MILITARY USE OF ATOMIC ENERGY." AND IF INDIA CAN BREAK INTO THE ATOMIC CLUB, "WHY NOT OTHERS?"

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2. EMBASSY DOES NOT RPT NOT BELIEVE SAG IS DISPOSED TO OR

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IN ANY POSITION TO TAKE MEASURES AGAINST INDIA AS SIGN OF
DISPLEASURE OVER INDIAN TESTS.

3. BASED ON OUR PREVIOUS TALKS WITH SA ATOMIC ENERGY
BOARD OFFICIALS (REFTEL B), IT IS OUR OPINION THAT INDIAN
TESTS WILL MAKE SA EVEN MORE RELUCTANT TO SIGN NPT. AND
IN LONG RUN, IT COULD GIVE SOUTH AFRICANS AN ADDED ARGUMENT
SHOULD THEY DECIDE TO PRODUCE THEIR OWN NUCLEAR WEAPONS,
DESPITE EARLIER PROTESTATIONS TO CONTRARY REPORTED REFTEL B.

4. ONLY IF US WERE TO TAKE STRONGLY NEGATIVE POSITION

AGAINST INDIA, WOULD WE BE LIKELY TO HAVE ANY EFFECT ON
SAG'S NUCLEAR INTENTIONS. AND EVEN THIS IS HIGHLY
PROBLEMATICAL.
HURD

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